

# IDEAS TO ACTION FUND

BRINGING YOUR IDEAS TO LIFE

## Compassion Kits @ Your Library

Final Report - Ideas to Action 2025

*By Tricia Cox, Burlington Public Library, December 2025*

**Number of people involved in or impacted by the project since Ideas to Action funding: 100**

**Do you anticipate that your project will continue after Ideas to Action funding?**

Yes. While the Compassion Kits project has come to a close, our commitment to supporting neighbors experiencing housing insecurity remains strong. The library will continue to offer vital services, including an on-site food pantry, access to a microwave, and our ongoing role as a warming and cooling center whenever it is safe to stay open. Patrons will still find free Wi-Fi, hotspot checkout, technology assistance, and access to books and media for learning and enjoyment. Library staff will also keep seeking opportunities to connect patrons with essential resources, strengthen partnerships with local organizations, and explore new ways to offer practical, people-centered support. Whether through future initiatives, expanded collaborations, or simple everyday moments of care, we remain dedicated to ensuring the library is a warm, welcoming place where everyone can find help, hope and connection.

**Did your project encourage partnerships and collaborations with any community partners or other WiLS members? Who did you connect with during this process and how might you sustain those connections?**

Our project included several community outreach initiatives to complement the Compassion Kits and provide additional support to individuals in need.

### *Successful Initiatives*

- Solomon's Closet Partnership: Collaborated with Solomon's Closet to provide free clothing to community members. This partnership allowed us to extend support beyond the backpacks and address immediate clothing needs.
- Laundromat Coupons: We provided laundry coupons for one free load at a local laundromat. Each coupon cost \$5, funded through a portion of the project budget, and gave recipients a practical way to care for their clothing.
- Scherrer Cares: Scherrer Cares is a non-profit, dedicated to giving back to the community. Their donations support a variety of causes and organizations including food pantries, pet shelters, school programs, and local fundraisers annually. We utilized \$681.79 from the

generous Scherrer Cares donation to help support this initiative, ensuring we could continue meeting the needs of our patrons and strengthening our community.

*Planned Initiatives*

- **Free Soup Coupons:** We had planned to distribute “free soup” coupons for local restaurants to provide an additional meal resource. Unfortunately, due to time constraints and hesitation from local restaurant owners, this initiative could not be implemented during the current project cycle. This remains a potential opportunity for future outreach.

These outreach efforts helped us extend the impact of the Compassion Kits and provided practical support tailored to community needs. The successes demonstrate the value of collaboration, while the unimplemented ideas highlight opportunities for future expansion.

**Thinking about your project, what was the most innovative part? What can you, or your community, do now that it couldn't before?**

Our goal for this project was simple: to ensure that everyone who walks through our doors feels seen, supported, and respected. By assembling kits filled with essential items and creating an easy-to-read resource guide, we transformed the assistance we were already providing into a clear, tangible service. This project also illuminated the level of need within our community. Because we are a rural/suburban area, and because the challenges of being unhoused are often hidden, many community members were unaware of how significant and complex these needs truly are.

The most innovative aspect of this project was the way it centralized multiple forms of support into a single, ready-to-use resource that staff could immediately offer in moments of crisis. This streamlined approach not only reduced barriers for patrons but also empowered staff with practical tools and consistent information. As a result, we can now respond more quickly, confidently, and compassionately in situations where time and dignity matter most, something we were not able to do as effectively before.

**How do you think other WiLS members could use what you learned and accomplished at their own organizations?**

We have put together a Success Guide with all of the information about our journey in creating Compassion Kits at our library in a website that can be shared with anyone interested in developing their own version for their community.

**Project product(s):**

The files for the brochures, product lists, blog posts, and budget breakdown can be found here: <https://labelsforbpl.my.canva.site/compassion-kit-success-guide>